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DE RUEHJS #0070 1981015
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
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FM AMCONSUL SURABAYA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0438
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA 0427
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 0167
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC
RUEHCAA/GEOLOGICAL SURVEY DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHINGTON DC
RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHINGTON DC
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0202
RUEHJS/AMCONSUL SURABAYA 0449

UNCLAS SURABAYA 000070

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, INR/EAP, AND EB/ESC/IEC
DOE FOR CUTLER/PI-32 AND NAKANO/P-42
COMMERCE FOR USDOC 4430

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SUBJECT: EAST JAVA MUDFLOW UPDATE: HOMES DISAPPEAR IN 10 SECONDS

REF: Surabaya 66 and previous

This message is sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

11. (SBU) Summary: Several houses west of the epicenter of the Sidoarjo mudflow collapsed into a sinkhole on July 14. Approximately 200 houses were damaged, 40 houses heavily. The local Government is assisting with evacuation and compensation, but some residents refuse to leave. Severe and sudden subsidence on this scale is unprecedented outside the containment area. BPLS has reportedly warned the government that the Porong road, the main link between Surabaya and the rest of East Java, should no longer be used. There is no warning system in place should the subsidence suddenly worsen or flammable gas levels suddenly rise. BPLS officials cannot predict if a major collapse beneath the Porong road and railway will occur. End Summary

Spreading Impact

12. (SBU) A sinkhole, swallowing some 20 square meters of land and threatening critical infrastructure, appeared in just minutes on July 14 in West Siring, a village on the edge of the Sidoarjo mudflow. Approximately 200 houses were damaged, 40 heavily, and 200 residents were forced out of their homes. BPLS officials and the USG Geological Hazards Advisor have expressed concern about the increased subsidence to the west and north of the mudflow's epicenter and the increasing number of geysers spraying water and methane into neighboring communities(reftel).

13. (SBU) The growing sinkhole is located approximately one kilometer west of the mudflow's epicenter and roughly 300 meters from critical rail and road links. As reported reftel, dikes inside the containment area have been collapsing throughout 2008/2009 due to subsidence. The main dikes are located only meters from the Porong road, which carries the bulk of East-West road traffic, and Indonesia's active East-West national railway link. The U.S. Geologic Survey and US Army Corps of Engineers scientists visited the site in late October 2008 and reported that this western dike was particularly vulnerable.

No Warning System

14. (SBU) BPLS Operations Engineer Handoko told us his agency has advised the central government that the Porong road should

not be used. However, the new toll road designed to replace it is at least a year from completion. Handoko added that there is no system in place to warn local residents should gas levels rise or a mass evacuation become necessary due to sudden dike breach or subsidence. BPLS has local gas monitoring stations at known gas flares and geysers in the community. GPS monitoring continues around the perimeter of the main containment dikes to assess localized subsidence. There is no way to communicate this information to local residents for evacuation, however.

Residents Displaced

15. (SBU) West Siring residents had thus far escaped the mud, which has inundated 11 villages since May 2003. Nearly 800 residents refuse to leave the evacuated neighborhood reportedly because of concerns about compensation. A Porong District official told displaced West Siring residents they can stay in the vacant former district court building until they find new homes. Displaced residents will receive government assistance amounting to USD 250 for each family for rent; USD 50 for each family's evacuation costs; and USD 30 per person as a six-month living allowance. East Java Governor Soekarwo told the East Java Parliament that the provincial government would provide houses for mudflow victims living outside the impact area map.

MCCLELLAND